

Business Overview: Barlow Rd Tyres Ltd

My name is Vakase Sameer and I am the owner and co director of Barlow Rd Tyres Ltd (which I will refer to as 'Barlow Rd Tyres' throughout this document), alongside my father Mohammed Sameer. Barlow Rd Tyres began operating on 01 May 2013 from 198b Barlow Road, Levenshulme, Manchester, M19 3HF. Barlow Rd Tyres has been operating continuously for over 11 years at this location, and this has been our sole premises.

The premises is used for retailing new and part-worn tyres, providing tyre fitting and other tyre related services and the storage of stock. This use has been consistent and uninterrupted since opening in May 2013. Whilst the use has not changed, the volume of sales and fitting work has grown significantly over the period.

Barlow Rd Tyres has grown organically from a fledgling business to where it stands today. In May 2023, we registered as a limited company and filed our first accounts earlier this year. We have also submitted VAT returns since 2022.

I believe that my evidence demonstrates that we have been operating at 198b Barlow Road, M19 3HF as Barlow Rd Tyres for over 11 years. The very decision to name our business after the street on which it sits and the witness testimonies I have provided to attest to its existence, are evidence of this. Our use of the site in question has been continuous and uninterrupted for the duration of this period. We started the business with very little finances and no previous experience and I have poured my heart and soul into turning it into a success. We have spent years earning the trust and respect of our customers, neighbours and local businesses and we would not be able to replicate this if forced to leave the premises. Our local area (Levenshulme) has grown into a vibrant, thriving community and we are proud to be part of it.

Products and Services

We provide the following:

- Fitting - tyres fitted to wheel rims, then fitted to vehicles
- Maintenance - pressure checks, air refills and wheel balancing
- Repair - puncture repair
- Tyre retailers on-site & online, stocking:
 - Part-worn (used) tyres - available in all common/running sizes
 - Brand new tyres

Stock Purchasing

- From May 2013 onwards we have purchased stock from job lots, scrap heaps, online marketplaces and Germany.

- Prior to Brexit we were able to purchase tyres from Germany and transport them to the UK due to freedom of movement. Post-Brexit we have imported secondhand tyres from Germany (see images - **ev1, ev2, ev3, , ev4, ev5, ev6, ev7, ev8, ev9, ev10, ev11**).
- We have an Economic Operators Registration and Identification (EORI) number, which is required to import goods and gain customs clearance from the EU post-Brexit.
- Since May 2013, all stock has been delivered to and stored at our premises located at 198b Barlow Road, Manchester, M19 3HF.

Operating Hours

Hours of operation:

- from 2013 to 2018, Mon-Sat 10:00-17:30.
- from 2018 onwards, Mon-Sat 9:30-17:30*

** We extended our operating hours based on customer feedback.*

Until 2019, the hours were divided between my father and myself, unless we were both required at the premises. I had two jobs up until this point because I was unable to rely solely on income generated by the business. My father gave up his physical role in 2019 due to ill health. From this time onwards, I have worked full time at Barlow Rd Tyres and it has been my sole occupation. My father is still involved in the business in an operational capacity.

Lease & Business Rates

- Lease - we have a verbal agreement with the landlord and we have paid rent continuously for the full duration our occupancy at 198b Barlow Road, M19 3HF. The landlord was my father's acquaintance and these sort of arrangements were common in our asian culture. I have been pushing for a written lease as I am aware of the risks posed as tenants. Due to unforeseen circumstances this has been delayed and we have continued as usual. We have a good relationship with our landlord based on mutual trust. I believe the absence of a written lease does not disprove our physical occupancy at the site.
- Business Rates - as per our agreement, the landlord is charging us rent which is inclusive of business rates and we are aware of our liability as occupants. The property is exempt from business rates and there is a 100% small business rate relief in place. Our current rateable value is set at £7900, based on the latest valuation from the VOA in 2021. We have always been below the £12,000 rateable threshold (the value was lower prior) and not liable to make payments.

Premises

- From May 2013 our premises consisted of an open yard, a workshop area and a storeroom. The workshop and storeroom were covered with a canopy of sheet metal supported by a frame of metal and wood. This structure was built in the 90's and in an acceptable condition when we opened.

- From 2013 until 2023, unprocessed and discarded tyres were kept in the yard and processed stock was kept in the storeroom. In 2023 we acquired tyre racks from a clearance sale allowing us to store the tyres in a professional manner within the yard area.
- From 2013 onwards fitting and maintenance services have been provided in the workshop area. The workshop has remained the same throughout. (see images - **ws1, ws2, ws3**)
- From May 2013 until 2015 access to the site was through a shared gate located outside the Landlord's property (198a Barlow Road, Manchester, M19 3HF). We signposted our business with a pavement sign, which was placed inside the gate. (see image - **old gate**)
- In late 2015, a gate was installed outside our property (198b Barlow Road) allowing better access to our premises. The Landlord erected a partition wall with a connecting door, to separate the commercial and residential land for privacy. All costs were covered by the Landlord. (see image - **new gate**)
- In 2023 we repaired and reinforced the existing structure. The canopy was replaced with similar metal sheeting, as the previous sheets were in poor condition. The aerial photos show evidence of deterioration over the subsequent years. I carried out this work myself.

Operations and Maintenance

- All of our services (fitting/repair/maintenance) have been carried out on-site since May 2013. This has been continuous and uninterrupted, even during the COVID pandemic (see Pandemic section for further information).
- Depending on the number of tyres being fitted, fitting times range from between 20 to 45 minutes per vehicle.
- Until recently, we carried out all tyre fittings and related services ourselves. We now have a part-time member of staff to help manage the workload.
- Our machinery and equipment has been permanently arranged in the workshop area since May 2013.
- A secondhand tyre machine was purchased prior to opening the business. A second machine was purchased from '786 Autos' in June 2013. A replacement machine was purchased in June 2013. (see invoices provided - **lv1, lv43**)
- I have been responsible for the maintenance, repairs and servicing of the on-site machinery and equipment. Skills gained from my background in Mechanical Engineering and my personal interest in repair and restoration have enabled me to competently perform this role. Consequently, we have reduced business costs and enhanced the lifespan of our machines and equipment. (see qualifications attached - **CT1, CT2***)

** Clerical error on the spelling of my forename.*

Pandemic

Barlow Rd Tyres remained open during the pandemic, as we qualified as a essential business. We struggled to stay afloat during this period; customers ranged from 0-5 per week and sales had fallen. We took a government bounce back loan as evidenced in the document provided (see document **BBL1**). Business gradually returned to normal after the lockdown restrictions were lifted.

Customers

Our customer base has grown extensively since opening in May 2013.

We started with a few regular customers, including friends and family, acquaintances (from my time as a private hire driver) and business traders from related industries. We also accepted walk-in customers. I have included statements that provide evidence of our dealings with several companies from May 2013 onwards.

In the earlier years we advertised our products on Gumtree (see images - **GT1, GT2, GT3, GT4, GT5, GT6, GT7, GT8**). We also relied on recommendations and word of mouth advertising, as well as mutual agreements with other businesses. Therefore, it has always been important to deliver a positive experience and competitive prices. Many of our customers are repeat customers who highly regard our services.

We can be found on Google, eBay and Facebook Marketplace.

Trade Volumes

- From May 2013-2015, we usually had between 5-10 customers per week.
- From 2015 to present day, this volume has increased steadily to 60-70 customers per week (with the exception of the pandemic period).
- During the pandemic there was a significant downturn, we had roughly 0-5 customers a week.
- Our sales increased due to several factors:
 - the installation of the new gate
 - pandemic restrictions were lifted
 - we started listing online on eBay (see images - **EB1, EB2, EB3**)
 - our trade customers were also growing in size hence generating more work
 - walk-ins increased due to repeat customers and customer recommendations
- 80% of online sales are posted to customers, 20% of customers have the tyres fitted on-site at an additional cost.
- We have achieved eBay 'top-rated seller' status and we have a 100% feedback rate. (see images - EB4, EB5)

Accounting and Paperwork

Our accounts have been handled by an accountant since 2022.

Council Queries

The Council have raised a query in regard to a series of planning applications submitted by the Landlord. These were submitted without my knowledge but were subsequently withdrawn.

The landlord has advised that he had instructed an agent in the past to make these applications on his behalf, due to his limited English and educational circumstances. He is unsure as to why the applications referred to the premises as a 'builders yard' but confirms it has indeed been used as a tyre fitting and storage place.

The Google Earth satellite images attached go from as far back as March 2016 up to 2023 (see images - **Ar1, Ar2, Ar3, Ar4, Ar5, Ar6, Ar7, Ar8, Ar9**). These images clearly show a volume of tyres consistently in each year at the premises. These images confirm the premises was used as a tyre fitting/storage facility and was not a builders yard. More importantly they demonstrate the consistent use of tyre fitting and storage, each and every year. The available images go as far back as 2016. It should be noted that the aerial images pre-date the withdrawn planning applications, therefore the information provided in those withdrawn applications was incorrect.

Invoices/Receipts

I have included receipts/invoices spanning the last 11 years.

Unfortunately, I have not kept all the paperwork generated over the last 11 years. A lot of my records were handwritten on paper and I have cleared these out over the years, as I was not expecting to need them. I have provided as much as possible. I often sent photographic confirmations to companies, some of which I have been able to locate on old devices and storage and I have sent these to you.

Most companies do not retain data older than 6-7 years as a general practice, so it has been difficult to obtain paperwork for the earlier years. For example, the Gumtree emails are historic listing summaries as the original listings are no longer stored by Gumtree. Our accountant has advised that we do not have a legal obligation to keep records going back further than 6 years for accounting and data purposes.

Evidence Provided:

I have provided the supporting evidence requested in digital format.

- Statements (documents - **s1, s2, s3, s4, s5, s6, s7, s8**)
- Statutory declarations (see document **Statdecs**)
- Landlord statutory declaration
- Invoices and receipts (docs - **lv1, lv2, lv3, lv4, lv6, lv7, lv8, lv9, lv10, lv11, lv12, lv13, lv14, lv16, lv16, lv17, lv18, lv19, lv20, lv21, lv22, lv23, lv24, lv25, lv26, lv27, lv28, lv29, lv30, lv31, lv32, lv33, lv34, lv35, lv36, lv37, lv38, lv39, lv40, lv41, lv42, lv43**)

- Metadata - historical photos are attached with the original metadata
- Messages between customers (images - **wa1, wa2, wa3, wa4, wa5, wa6, wa7, wa8, wa9, wa10, wa11, wa12, wa13, wa14, wa15, wa16, wa17, wa18**)

Photographic Images:

- Gate (images **oldgate, newgate**)
- Aerial view of premises taken from Google Earth (images - **Ar1, Ar2, Ar3, Ar4, Ar5, Ar6, Ar7, Ar8, Ar9**)

** Captured by Google Earth*

Documents:

- VAT related documents (**Vat1, Vat2**)